**TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN EDUC 631/697**

**Congratulations! If you’ve found your way to these tips, you have followed the directions in the e-mail, message, and announcement and are on your way to learning and success in EDUC 631!**

**A few things you should know…**

1. The textbooks are important to the course. Hopefully by now you have ordered your texts and they have arrived. You will use some of them, not only in this course, but in future courses, so they are wise investments. Because this is an online course, you will be expected to read and keep current with the information contained in the texts. They were carefully chosen to provide you with information specific to your program of study. I strongly suggest buying (and reading) a copy of the APA manual as well.

2. Online courses are not easier than traditional face-to-face courses. They are however, more convenient! There’s no scrambling to get to class on time, it doesn’t matter what you wear, and there’s no hunting for a parking place. However, in the online environment, you carry a great deal of responsibility for your own learning. If you get behind, it can become almost impossible to catch up, so it’s important to stay current. You will see that for a good deal of the course, assignments are due on Sunday evening at midnight. However, beginning on November 28, assignments are due on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, also at midnight. This is due to my factoring in the Thanksgiving break and trying to give you a little time off.

3. There is no provision for late assignments. I love teaching and I especially enjoy teaching online because I am at heart, a computer geek (there, I’ve said it). However, I have many responsibilities at the university including department chair, licensure officer and especially important this fall, heading up our accreditation visit. I have to (just like you do with your own teaching responsibilities and families) budget my time wisely, which is I why I have to stand by my “no late assignments accepted” rule even when it’s just as hard for me as it is for you. Thank you for understanding.

4. Each week I will provide you with a “Read Me First” folder. There you will see directions for the week and any needed resources. I will do my best to post these at least on time, and sometimes they may even be posted ahead of time.

5. Usually, resources can be found in the “Content” section. There you will find a copy of the Elementary Master’s Handbook. Please read this as it provides many answers to the questions you may have.

6. Generally, professors cannot help with technology issues. However, there are a few things that I have learned along the way that may help:

\*Keep your browser updated. Sometimes when you encounter an issue such as being unable to attach your assignment, it is due to an outdated browser. Keeping that updated, particularly for those of you who use PCs, (as opposed to MACS) seems to help immensely.

\*For documents, use WORD. This not only is something which I can open, it enables me to make comments right on your documents and provide you with what I hope will be valuable feedback.

\*Save, save, save. As you are completing assignments, I advocate getting a USB and saving everything. Even for discussion postings, I am a fan of saving them as a word document first. Then copy and paste into the discussion forum. That way, if the power goes off suddenly or you receive an error message while posting, you don’t have to recreate the wheel.

\*This version of Blackboard is fairly new. We just started using it over the summer. I’m still learning it myself, but it is growing on me. The university has contracted to provide students with a help number. That number is toll free and is: (855) 501-0857. There is also a website at: <https://ellucian.service-now.com>. I suggest saving this as one of your favorites or bookmarks for easy access. You will log onto the site with your G-WU e-mail address and password.

7. For communicating with me and with one another, the best method is the “messages” tool within the course room. This helps me separate “course” e-mail from the myriad other e-mails I get during the day and allows me to give you priority attention. When you use the “e-mail” function within the course room, it automatically sends it outside the course room. I may occasionally send you an important message that way, but as much as possible, I will use the course room messaging system as well and ask that you do the same.

8. Online courses, at least in my humble opinion, are not intended to give you simply a spattering of assignments in which you try to rush through. Just as if we were in a face-to-face class, I try to create a feeling of community. While I sometimes post assignments ahead of time, I always advocate taking your time, getting feedback and as much as possible, staying on track with the syllabus. I have had students who wanted all of the assignments at once and rushed through them…while this might work for some folks, I don’t think it gives you the full benefit of the class. So stay current, THINK ahead, but don’t try to get too far ahead.

9. Unless there is a dire emergency of some sort, I am in the course room daily (generally more than once a day). I suggest that you check in at least a couple of times each week. Sometimes as we progress in assignments, see problem areas or determine that something is going better than expected, we may decide to make small changes and I want you to be cognizant of those.

10. Lastly, keep in mind this is a GRADUATE level course. I will give you as much help and support as possible, but as a graduate learner, you are expected to do a good bit of proactive work. If terms or assignments are unfamiliar to you, try googling them…there is a WEALTH of information available. You are your own best resource.

I look forward to sharing the next few months with you.

Dr. Ingle